



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, October 15, 2007

CONTACT: Victor Bjornberg
Travel Montana
Montana Department of Commerce
406-841-2795

Marissa Kozel
Montana Department of Commerce
406-841-2772

Montana Department of Commerce Awards \$86,227 to Rocky Boy & Fort Belknap Tourism Projects

(HELENA) – Today Governor Brian Schweitzer announced that \$86,227 in funds from the Montana Department of Commerce have been awarded the Chippewa-Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation and the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council, for tourism attraction and facility improvement projects.

"These projects are essential for the economic vitality of the tourism industry in Indian Country," said Governor Brian Schweitzer. "Visitors from around the world come to Montana to experience the unique culture of Montana's native people. Supporting tribal tourism projects helps to strengthen tribal economies, while fostering cultural understanding."

"Assisting community and economic development in Montana's Indian Country is an important focus for the Montana Commerce Department," said Commerce Director Preite. "These funds from the state's tourism 'bed tax' will leverage tribal and other funds to create improved facilities and attractions that will serve both of these communities, their visitors and the Montana communities around them."

The Chippewa-Cree Tribe will use a \$66,227 grant from the Commerce Department for improvements to the Rocky Boy Powwow Grounds. The powwow ground improvements include electrical and water service upgrades, repairs and painting of the dance arbor, bleachers and traditional hand game facility, development of ten RV spaces with water and electrical service, and new signage for the powwow grounds. The Chippewa-Cree Tribe is matching the state funds with \$88,500 it invested to pave and improve the road

into the powwow grounds as well as the walkways within the grounds. The 44th Annual Rocky Boy Powwow will take place in early August 2008.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community Council will use a \$20,000 Commerce Department grant to make improvements to the Horse Capture Community Park Tourism Center Rest Area at the intersection of U.S. Hwy 2 and Montana 66. The Tourism Center improvements include installing handicapped accessible doors, new windows, lighting, bathroom upgrades along with purchasing materials for cultural programs offered visitors and residents. The Fort Belknap Council is matching the state funds with worker salaries and supplies to complete the center improvements through the council's Vocational Rehabilitation Program and Maintenance Program. .

Betsy Baumgart, Administrator of Travel Montana was pleased to have tribal applications submitted this year and encourages the submittal of more tribal applications in the future. "Tribal Tourism is not only important to Indian Country, but also to the entire state. Our travel research shows that more than one million of our 10.4 million out of state guests visited our Native American sites."

The grant funds for both projects come from the 4% state tourism "bed tax" assessed on the lodging price of all accommodations across Montana, including campgrounds.

###